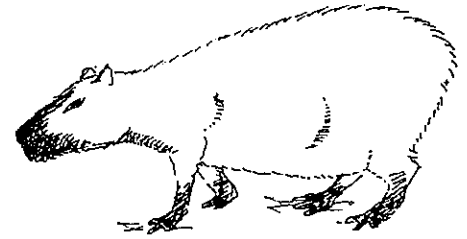


## TECHNICAL TALK

Authors have different styles of writing. One author may use very short sentences. Another may use long, involved sentences. One author may use short, common words; another may use longer or more unusual words. Some authors use a lot of images and figures of speech while others use mainly description. Many of the lessons in this kit discuss the things an author can include to develop a special style. Let's put some of these things together and compare the style in several short paragraphs.

### TRY IT

Read the paragraph below. Then answer the questions.



### CAPYBARA

Ⓐ Have you ever heard of the capybara? Ⓑ It is an animal that lives in South America. Ⓒ It is the largest of all rodents, so it is a cousin of rats, squirrels, and beavers. Ⓓ How big is the capybara? Ⓔ It grows to be four feet long and weighs in at more than 100 pounds. Ⓕ It looks something like a small pig with stiff brown or gray hair. Ⓖ The capybara is a good swimmer. Ⓗ In fact, it has webbed toes and likes to stay around water. Ⓘ People sometimes call the capybara a "water hog."

1. Which sentence is the longest one? \_\_\_\_
2. Which sentence is the shortest? \_\_\_\_
3. How many words in the paragraph have three or more syllables? \_\_\_\_
4. How many questions are asked? \_\_\_\_
5. What comparison does the writer use to help you understand what a capybara looks like? \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you think the style of the author is easy to read? \_\_\_\_\_

In the piece about capybaras the longest sentence is ③. It has 17 words. The shortest sentence is ① with 5 words. Sentence length is one key to style. The average sentence length for this paragraph is a little more than 10 words. Generally it is easier to read short sentences than long ones.

Words are also important. There are six words that have three syllables or more. The author's style depends partly on the length and strangeness of words used. Considering everything, the paragraph about capybaras is fairly easy to read. Read the next two paragraphs. Decide which is easier to read and tell why.



MAYAN POTTERY

### THE MAYAS

- ① The Maya Indians once lived in Central America. They built cities but did not live in them. The Mayan people lived in scattered huts. On their small farms they grew and ate corn, beans, squash, and chili peppers. They ate little meat because they kept only dogs and turkeys. When the Mayas had a celebration they went to a city. There they danced, sang, held religious events, and sometimes offered human sacrifices. As soon as the celebration was over, they went back home to their farms. The city was deserted once again.
- ② Mayan art was often used for religious purposes. The artists painted temple walls with large colorful murals that had no shadows or perspective in them. Sculptors chiseled small statues and very complicated pillars of symbols related to the gods they worshipped. Artists also decorated everyday things like pottery with paintings, and these sometimes showed everyday scenes that were less likely to have religious importance.

Which paragraph is more difficult? Explain your answer by comparing word lengths, sentence lengths, and the difficulty of words the author uses.

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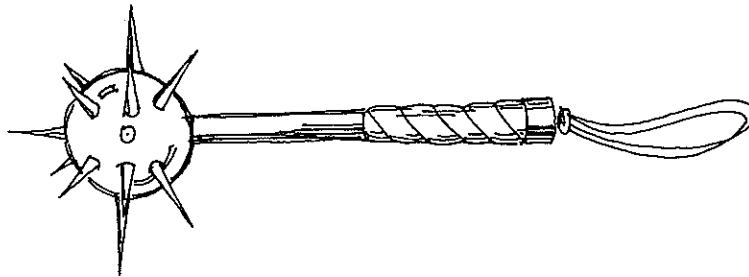
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## KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOR

### UNIT 10 Lesson 3 Critical Reading

Read this article about knights. It includes some unusual words that make for difficult reading. Look up each word in a dictionary and write its meaning below.



Knights were highly trained warriors who flourished in the years from about 1100 to 1500 A.D. We could compare them to army officers today. They were trained to fight with all kinds of weapons. They might use swords, battle axes, lances, or maces in battle. Knights wore heavy armor to protect their bodies. Before 1300, knights wore conical helmets to protect their heads and noses. Padded jackets and mail protected the body. In later years the knights wore heavy steel armor. It included many parts that were buckled onto the man's body. Gauntlets covered the hands and sollerets the feet.

When guns came into use, the armor was made so heavy that a crane had to be used to put a knight on his horse. If he fell off his horse, he could not even get up off the ground. Of course, the horses had to be very big and strong. They had to carry the knight, his armor, and the horse's armor, too.

Look up these words and write their meanings.

1. flourished \_\_\_\_\_
2. lance \_\_\_\_\_
3. mace \_\_\_\_\_
4. conical \_\_\_\_\_
5. mail (the armor kind) \_\_\_\_\_
6. gauntlet \_\_\_\_\_
7. solleret \_\_\_\_\_

Now read the paragraph again. Notice how much better you can understand the full meaning when you know the words. When you read, make a habit of using your dictionary to look up words you don't know.

### HOW DID YOU DO?

